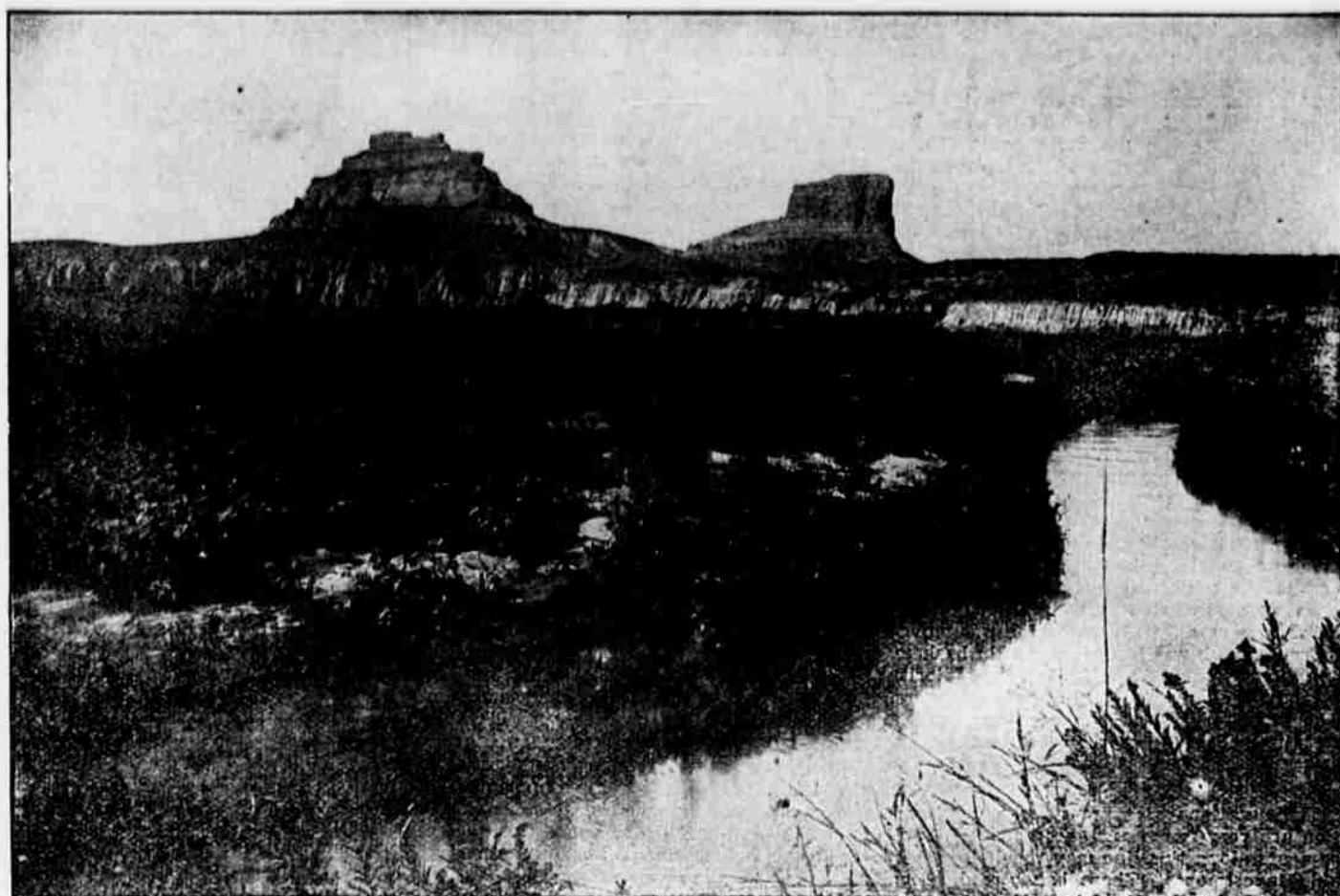


Picturesque Western Nebraska



COURT HOUSE AND JAIL ROCKS—COURT HOUSE ROCK IRRIGATION CANAL IN THE FOREGROUND.

Daring Deeds of Two Philippine Scouts

General Lawton felt that it was necessary to send an apologetic telegram to General Otis, in Manila, for having captured the town of San Ildefonso, relates a correspondent of Harper's Weekly, when his orders had been not to bring on an engagement with the enemy, but only to develop their position. Much to his surprise, he had to send another message of similar character within twenty-four hours, for San Miguel, where it was expected that the insurgent General Gregorio del Pilar would put up his greatest resistance, fell before the onslaught of seventeen scouts on May 13.

Young was in charge of the seventeen, who were drawn from the Oregons, Minnesotas and North Dakotas. They started at daylight from Colonel Sumner's headquarters to San Ildefonso, supported by a company of the Second Oregons and one of the Thirteenth Minnesotas. The entire command was again under Captain Birkhimer, assisted by Captain Case.

Two and a half miles were covered before the scouts were deployed and the advance guard of the two supporting companies thrown out in skirmish line. The scouts seemed bent on a veritable foot race, and the rear companies had great difficulty in keeping up with their advance. The remarkable capture of San Ildefonso the day before had given these reckless fellows a courage and a confidence in their own ability that would have carried them, yelling like demons, against a line of 1,000 Filipinos with the supreme assurance that any man among them was capable of putting to flight his hundred or capturing the entire lot.

A mile and a half out of San Miguel the scouts struggled through the high tasseled jungle-grass of the marsh, calling to one another now and then, as they almost lost the sense of direction in the tangled maze. A torpid creek meandered through the flat muddy ground and the road made its crossing on a curious hunch-backed bridge, bearing aloft a great sign to the effect that here was the entrance to the barrio of San Miguel. We are nearing the scene of action and every man begins to feel that strain upon the muscles which comes with the expectation of being fired upon from every canebrake and from every little rise of ground. It is an odd sensation, this moving forward, peering with anxious eyes into the distance before you for some moving human figure; this waiting for the crashing volley and the whirl of the high-keyed bullets. When the tension becomes too great our men open singly, then a few more, and then perhaps the whole line, on the thickets before them. It is a wonderful relief to the feelings to do a bit of shooting one's self.

Snarl of the Mausers.
It has come! The prolonged snarl of the Filipino army, snapping, biting, increasing in volume, until one is ready to declare that the enemy numbers thousands instead of a scant 400.

The scouts, a hundred yards apart, have disappeared as if swallowed up by the earth. One wonders if they were all killed at the first volley. No! As the fire slackens a head slowly rises to the right; the eyes are looking straight forward and the neck is slowly bent until the cheek is laid on the rifle-stock. One man rises to his knee to get greater elevation and then the insurgents let loose a leaden torrent and every man has disappeared again.

"Boys, I want you to move up twenty yards. Pass the word along the line." It is Young's stentorian voice giving the command. "Come on now," and the line of men, so far apart, stand up and run forward and lie down.

The support and the reserve are far in the rear, marching steadily forward in an attempt to overtake the sprinting scouts.

At a thousand yards the Mauser bullets intended for the evasive leaders come down on the reserve like a rain storm. Everybody dodges and some scatter; men always do a little dodging when they cannot see or locate the enemy.

"Oh! Oh! I've got it!" gasps a big Minnesotan, and he staggers in a little circle and then lurches toward the rear.

"Say, fellows! Ericson's hit! Where's the hospital steward?" shouts somebody.

"Here I am! Lie down there, Ericson, or you'll fall!" the steward yells, as the wounded man reels blindly. He obeys, just as the litter, with its Chinese carriers, gets to him. "Take him back there in the ditch, Chinos. Pronto (quickly) Chinos, pronto!"

"Get ready to move up! The scouts have got 'em on the run," comes the command. "Take your interval! Steady there, men! Steady there! Don't fire; the scouts are in front of you," and the skirmish line swings across the open fields, the captain of the company striding along on the left, with his slouch hat pulled over his eyes and swinging a looted silver-headed cane carelessly in his hand (the badge of civil office owned by some past Filipino alcalde, perhaps).

Rushing the Natives.

It is true enough; the scouts have broken the center of a line of several hundred men, who outflanked far to the right and left, and the whole body of retreating insurgents are running like greyhounds over the last open field, trying to reach the cover of the buildings in the town. There stand our men, pumping their Krags like machines at little bunches of blue-clothed figures, who run, crouched forward, apparently seeking to hide behind one another in their terror. Some of them have nerve, however, for five turn, stop dead still, take aim, and fire together, afterward taking up their retreat.

"Kill the officer on horseback! There he goes—over there on the right by the bushes," and every man concentrates his fire on a Filipino lashing his horse into a dead run and riding in the cover of a fence row as much as possible. "We've got him! We've got him!" several men yell simultaneously, as the horse pitches forward in one long somersault. The horse lies still, but the man wriggles out and runs limping after his soldiers, who are disappearing in the town.

Over the last field the scouts run. "Don't give 'em a chance to stop in the town, boys! Carry 'em through!" Young calls, and in another three minutes only the crack! crack! crack! of the rifles on the town tell the story that the fight goes on. Captain Birkhimer and his orderly have stuck with the scouts throughout, and why they have not been shot to pieces is a mystery, for they are the only mounted men in the advance, and a fine target with their horses.

The support is moving in on the town, but the reserve does not know the country, and has received no orders, so they are still marching forward in columns of twos. Captain Case, who has kept in touch with the scouts and the supporting company by riding through the zone of fire several times on horseback, comes galloping back through the deserted outer streets of the town—deserted, saved by one scared family of Filipinos, who are flying a white flag from their open window—and orders the Minnesotans to move up along the road skirting a broad river which divides the city a little lower down.

The scouts, in their desperate hurry to capture the town, have not sent a man across this stream to feel whether the enemy does not lie there in force, ready to spur in a deadly cross-fire from the opposite bank. Single shots only, from sharpshooters, come over the water from the bamboo houses beyond, as the tramping

men in single file pass the more open spots on the road.

A vanguard of the enemy holds the road commanding the narrow bridge, and three or four more intrepid spirits are firing from the loopholed stone church tower at any scout who dares approach the opposite end of the causeway.

A Warm Corner.

"Every one of you fellows keep away from that bridge! You'll get killed if you try to reach it! Keep under cover!" cries Young.

He is right; it is a hot place, and any man or small body of men attempting to cross it is apt to be wiped out of existence. Then the approach is bad for a distance of forty feet on either side of the entrance—the road bare of houses—giving the enemy a capital chance to kill troops before they can get to the bridge.

"Wait a minute and I will see if I can't get to that stone post and look around. You men stay here," and, with the words, Young makes a rush for the only place of concealment, behind the corner pillar of the bridge railing. The road is cut up in little patches of dust, which leave gouges in its hard surface before and behind him, but he is untouched as he crouches behind the broad column. He peers from the side of the post a moment, and then brings his rifle slowly out and up. His aim is low and short, evidently at some insurgent head thrust out from a building in the street beyond.

Young stepped out from behind his cover, and was struck fairly in the knee joint by a bullet from an insurgent Remington. The great handsome fellow, six feet four in height—the man with iron nerve and most marvelous daring, the man whom General Lawton admired for his commanding spirit and cold, calculating, unimpassioned bravery, which made him a natural leader—lay where he fell, with a leg so frightfully shattered that he could not move. The greater pity of it was that Young was a civilian, not a soldier. He had come to the Philippines in search of gold and fortune, and had been drawn into the vortex of war because, as he expressed it, "he couldn't keep out of the scrap." Into the new-old life he had thrust himself with keen relish, but the game was against him, and a hero paid the full penalty of war in death two days later.

Brave Rivals.

Harrington, the silent man-hunter of the Oregons, who lived completely within himself, and who fought with the scouts always far in the lead of every one else, rushed out from cover to the assistance of Young, heedless of the raking bullets. "Go back, Harrington; you'll get killed here," pleaded Young. "I'm all right, old man! I'll take care of myself."

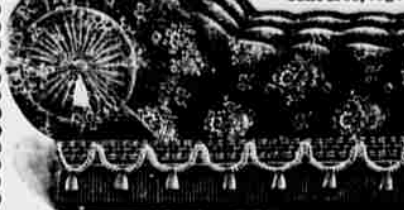
But Harrington heeded not and, though a small man, he slowly carried the wounded giant back to the cover of the houses. There was much outward rivalry between these two men—the sort of rivalry which exists between comrades who are both desirous of winning a reputation for being fearless of death—but, deep in their hearts there lay hidden the bond of mutual respect and admiration, though their lips often audibly formed the expressive words, "That damn fool will be killed yet."

Tears stood in Harrington's eyes as, kneeling, he unwound his first-aid dressing and tenderly bandaged the shattered limb. He only said, "I'm damn sorry, Young!" And the face, contorted with pain, cleared and faintly smiled as Young replied, "You're good stuff, Harrington." They grasped hands in their last handshake on earth, and a moment later Harrington and the scouts had charged across the bridge, and the handful of insurgents left behind were flying before them, some falling mortally wounded as they ran. Two days later Harrington lay dead on the open field near San Isidro and Young breathed his last in the hospital at Manila.

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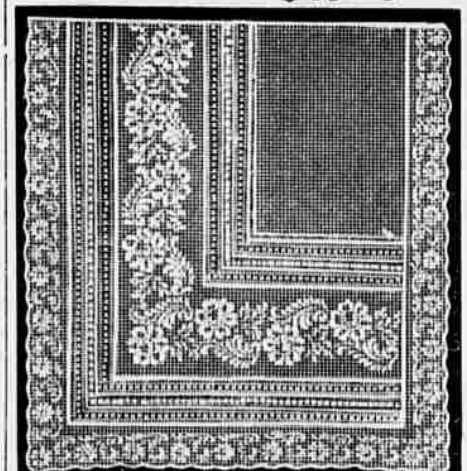
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